

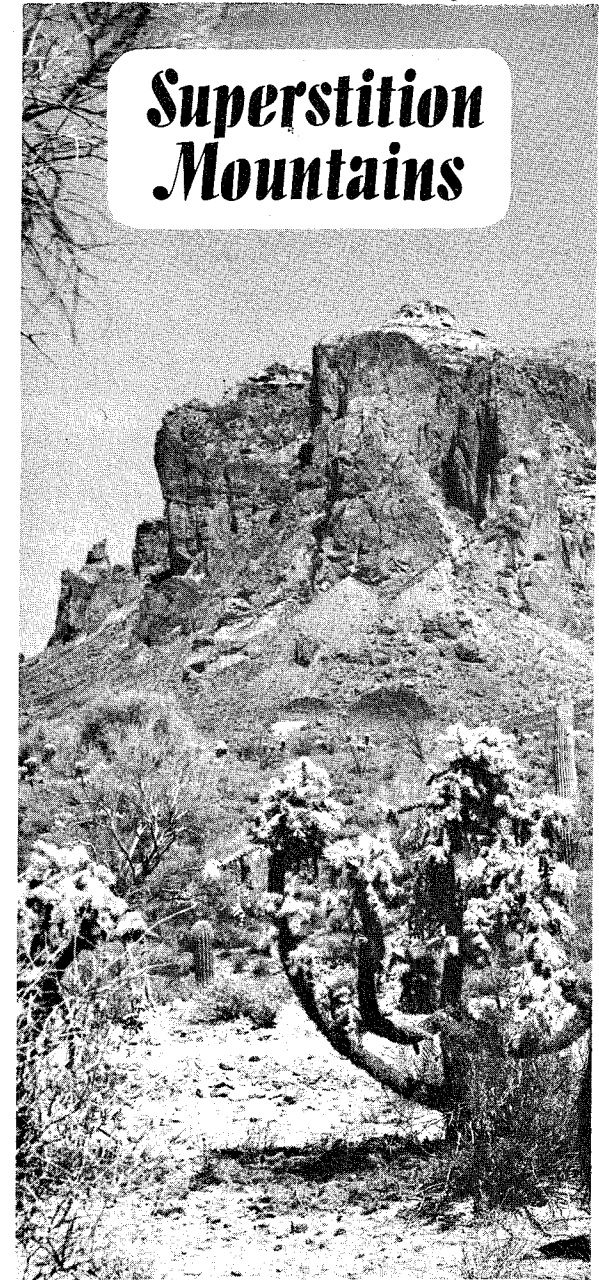
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Superstition Mountains



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HIGHWAYS

SUPERSTITION MOUNTAINS

Legend has it that in the heart of this dark and formidable mountain just southeast of Phoenix lies the famous Lost Dutchman Gold mine. Prospectors still search for it.

In 1862 there arrived in America, a German immigrant, named Jacob Walzer. He was born in Wurttemberg, Germany, in 1808 and attended Heidelberg University as a young man. It is significant that he came to Prescott, Arizona in 1864, the same year that Darrell Duppa, whom he had known in New Zealand, arrived at the same place in the Territory of Arizona. Both men became prospectors and both finally settled in the village of Phoenix. Duppa, however, came first with the Jack Swilling party and helped lay out the townsite of the future capitol of Arizona and suggested its interesting name. Walzer in the meantime, spent much time in the newly discovered gold fields of the Southwest. In 1873 he was at the Walker mining discoveries and later went to the Vulture Gold Mine of Henry Wickenburg, at Wickenburg, Arizona.

The story of abandoned Spanish mines in the Superstition Mountains was well known by all the early prospectors but very few ventured into the forbidden recesses of these dangerous mountains because of the savage Apache Indians, who guarded it as their sacred domain.

From 1848 when the Spaniards mining there were massacred by the Apaches, until the opening of the Silver King mine along Queen Creek in 1875, only a few of the bravest men penetrated the interior. In 1881, Walzer, accompanied by Jacob Wisner of Florence, entered the mountains from the east along Queen Creek. They discovered an old Spanish mine, in the possession of two young Mexicans, whom they shot, thinking they were Indians. The mine was a vein eighteen inches thick of almost pure gold. Their discovery caused a sensation which has not subsided to this day. Walzer would not disclose the exact location of his fabulous mine, but gave out many interesting hints. Ten years later he died in Phoenix at the age of 83, with the statement that he hid his mine, "So no miner would ever find it." His friend Darrell Duppa, died one year later and both are buried in the city of Phoenix.

Above was condensed from the book entitled "The True Story of Jacob Walzer and his Famous Hidden Gold Mine" by Charles Frederick Higham.

FROM "ARIZONA PLACE NAMES":

The Pima Indians have a legend concerning a great flood, the foam of which caused the broad white streak in the limestone extending for several miles along the face of the rough Superstition Mountains. Because of this legend the Spanish referred to these Mountains as the Sierra de la Espuma (mountain of foam). Their current name may be attributed to the stories told by the valley-dwelling Indians that the mountains were bad medicine, since no one who entered them ever returned. This was probably true, because Apaches watched for strangers from the peaks and ambushed any who dared enter the mountains. The United States cavalry disproved the legends concerning the disappearance of men. At least two skirmishes with Apaches occurred in the Superstition Mountains from which the military men emerged with few casualties. Like other mining states, Arizona has its own store of lost mine tales, and that of the Lost Dutchman Mine is one of the best known.

An excellent book entitled "Superstition Treasures" by Travis Marlowe is available at Post Office Box 99, Apache Junction, Arizona, 85220. The price is \$2.00 - softback cover; \$3.50 - hardback cover.

A LOOP TRIP THROUGH THE DESERT (Superstition Area-Mining Towns-Apache Trail)

Here is a delightful spring-time exploration trip for those who love the desert and spectacular mountain scenery. It is a choice area for photographers, rock hounds, and those with an interest in desert flora or geology, or those who like to see a great open-pit copper mine, perhaps visit a smelter, and traverse the Gila River Valley in the footsteps of General Philip Kearny on his route to California in the Mexican War. AND all without getting off good pavement.

From either Phoenix or Tucson one may make an interesting loop trip through this area. The actual loop--Florence Junction, Superior, Mammoth, Oracle Junction is approximately 150 miles, plus one's distance from starting point in Tucson or Phoenix. Go one way, return the other.

The trip is logged eastward from the Salt River Valley, driving past the legendary Superstition Mountains on U.S. 60-70 to Florence Junction. Twelve miles beyond the Junction (same Hwy.) is the entrance to the Southwestern Arboretum. Here in a beautiful mountain-surrounded area, are gathered arid-land plants from all over the world - and a bird sanctuary, in addition. There are self-guiding trails requiring from fifteen minutes to over an hour. Well worth a leisurely stop - and a nice picnic spot, too.

Three miles beyond the Arboretum, at Superior (mining and smelter town hdqtrs. of Magma Copper Company) turn south on State 177. Here one enters jumbled mountains (good new paved highway, no severe grades but some sharp curves), and the great copper basin through which the Gila River flows.

Seventeen miles from the State 177 turn-off is the new town of Kearny, built to replace the old towns of Ray and Sonora that were gobbled up by the great open-pit mines of the Kennecott Copper Corporation. It is amazing to see what has been done to create a new town in the middle of isolated mountainous desert country. This the new area where General Kearny paused on his famous trip across the nation in 1846. ON THE LAST THURSDAY OF EVERY MONTH THE KENNECOTT COPPER CORPORATION CONDUCTS AN EXTENSIVE TOUR OF ITS OPEN-PIT MINING OPERATIONS AT RAY AND PRODUCTION FACILITIES AT THE TOWN OF HAYDEN, A LITTLE FURTHER DOWN THE HIGHWAY.

FROM "ARIZONA PLACE NAMES":

The Apache Trail was late-born. When the trail finally developed, it followed Tonto Trail, referred to at times as the Yavapai Trail because members of the latter tribe lived along the north Tonto Creek which the trail followed.

The first part of the later automobile highway was built in connection with the construction of Roosevelt Dam in 1905, when the Reclamation Service cleared a road from Mesa to connect with the settlement of Roosevelt at the dam. The road was carved along the sides of mountains, through canyons, and over plateaus by Apaches under the direction of Louis C. Hill, supervising engineer. The Apache Trail Stage Company was incorporated on October 8, 1914. It was this stage line which hauled passengers who disembarked at Globe from the railroad, to Phoenix where they again boarded the train. The company did its best to make the trip as entertaining as possible. In many instances this included putting up numerous road signs bearing place names with fabulously interesting and entirely inaccurate stories. Stage passengers were enthralled by the tall tales of the Wild West, told by the drivers. The charter for the stage company expired on October 8, 1939.

The Apache Trail is one of the most beautiful in Arizona.